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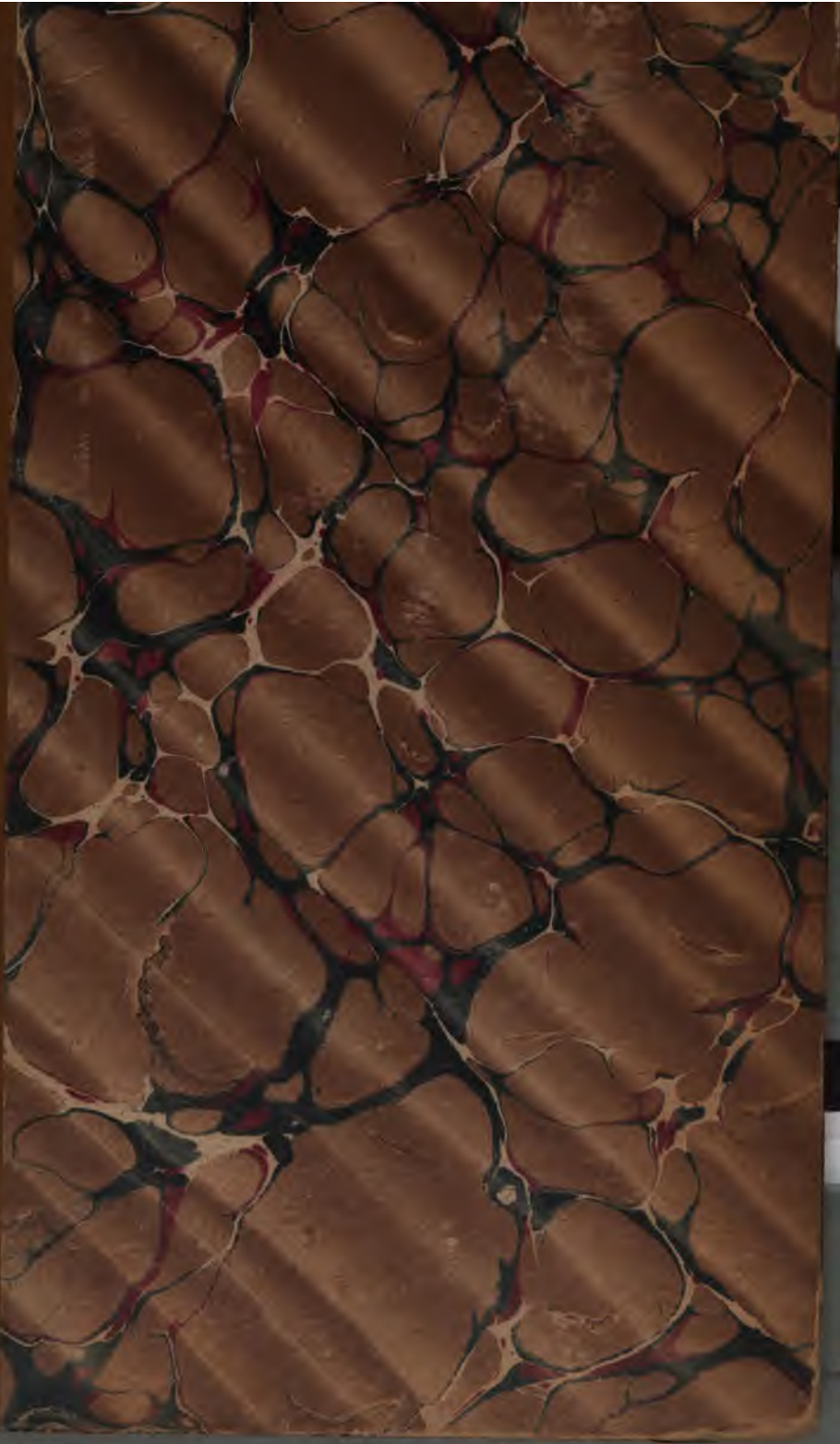
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FROM

Joseph S. Swain

S E R M O N

PREACHED IN KING'S CHAPEL,

NOVEMBER 22, 1835,

THE SUNDAY AFTER THE FUNERAL

OF THE

REV. JAMES FREEMAN, D. D.

By F. W. P. GREENWOOD,

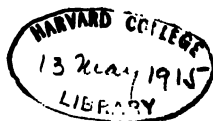
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SERMON.

DOETH MY FATHER YET LIVE? Gen. xlv. 3.

FIVE sabbaths ago, I had occasion to observe to you, my brethren, that it was then fifty-three years, since our father, the senior pastor of this church, commenced his ministerial services here. I said also, that his active labors having been suspended for a long period by the will of Providence, he was on that other, and perhaps more difficult post of duty, standing and waiting;—that he was standing, calm, cheerful and composed, his lamp trimmed and burning in his hand, waiting to hear the cry, “Behold the bridegroom cometh!”

At length the cry was made at midnight, and the bridegroom came. The servant was found watching and ready, he has gone in with his Lord, and the door is shut.

Doeth our father yet live? In the sense in which the words of the text were originally spoken, we know that he does not. If we answer the question according to its first and literal import, as it was put by Joseph to his brethren, we must say that our father is no longer living—that he is numbered among the dead. But is there not another sense with which we may clothe those ancient words of filial inquiry? And in that other, spiritual, Christian sense, may we not answer precisely as the

brethren of Joseph did, when on a former occasion he put to them a similar inquiry?—when “he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive? And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive.” Is it not well with our father? Is he not alive? Does he not live, not only in our memories and hearts, but a far more enduring life in the memory of God—in the presence of God—in the society of the just—in the mansions of heaven? Is it not well with him, and is he not in good health? Are not his pains relieved, his sicknesses removed; his groanings quieted, and his sorrows ended? That burthen of many years which pressed upon him so wearily, is it not taken off? That veil of dimness which had begun to gather before his mind, is it not drawn aside? Those daily sinkings, those nightly sufferings, that anxious looking for him who came not, are they not over now?—Our father is alive; he is in good health. He is gone to the land where pain and sickness are unknown; his youth is renewed; his faculties are more than restored; his vigor is immortal; he lives in a better country, that is, an heavenly, with saints and angels, with Christ and with God.

But he is gone from the earth, where we, for a very little while, are yet remaining. His body has been laid in the tomb. We shall see his face no more. And although for the last ten years his voice had not been heard in this place, where for so many preceding years it had proclaimed the truths of religion; although during that term he had lived at some distance from us, and in a measure secluded from society and the world, yet his entire departure from this earthly scene in which w

stood together, has reawakened former sympathies, and opened the fountain of old affections, and brought him again vividly before us, and impressed us with a renewed sense of his great worth, and made us feel how much we respected and loved him. Under these circumstances of strongly excited remembrance and affection, we are animated with a natural desire to retrace the lineaments of his character, and to be made acquainted with, or to recall the events of his life.

Though the character of Dr. Freeman was unobtrusive, and his life was signalized by no striking exploits, yet neither the one nor the other could with any justice or propriety be called common. His character was marked with some rare lines, and his life is inseparably connected with the religious history of our country.

James Freeman was born in the neighboring town of Charlestown, where his parents, Constant and Lois Freeman, at that time resided, on the 22d of April, 1759. He received his preparatory instruction at the public schools in Boston, under Mr. Lovell and others; entered Cambridge College in 1773, and was graduated at that institution in 1777, at the age of 18. Among his classmates I find the names of the late Dr. Bentley, Judge Dawes, and Rufus King. Both at school and at college his morals were pure, and his scholarship, though not distinguished, respectable. He was in the habit of undervaluing his own youthful proficiency; but his few surviving cotemporaries do not speak of it so disparagingly. In after years he was certainly considered to be a ripe scholar, by those who could not well be mistaken in their judgment. He was then an excellent mathematician; was well acquainted with geography and history

at large, and thoroughly so with the geography and history of his own country; and could read with ease and pleasure the Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish languages.

His early life was not without incidents, though I am unable to state them with any particularity. The last year of his college life was spent during the troubles and strong excitements of the opening revolutionary war; and it is known that his own feelings were so decidedly enlisted on the side of his native and in opposition to the mother country, that he engaged in the disciplinary instruction of a company of men, which was raised on Cape Cod for the purpose of joining the colonial troops. Another incident which may be mentioned, is, his chartering a small vessel, bearing a cartel, with the design of proceeding to Quebec, with his sister, to place her with her father, who was then in that city. On his passage he was captured by a privateer, and having arrived at Quebec, he was detained there, through some misunderstanding or suspicion, on board a prison-ship for several months, and during a still longer time as a prisoner on parole. He suffered much inconvenience and trouble in consequence, but found opportunity, notwithstanding, to pursue his theological studies.

It was just at the close of the war, however, that the event took place, which was to have the principal influence on Mr. Freeman's life — I mean his pastoral connexion with this church.

On the evacuation of Boston by the British troops in March, 1776, the rector of King's Chapel, Dr. Caner, who espoused the English cause, accompanied them; and his assistant, Mr. Troutbeck, also went away some

months afterward. For about a year the Chapel remained shut. In the autumn of 1777, the congregation of the Old South Church, whose house of worship had been spoiled by the British troops, and used by them as a riding-school, applied to the few proprietors of King's Chapel who were left in Boston, for permission to worship here. The permission was obtained, and the Old South congregation had the Chapel to their sole use for a few months; after which, as the proprietors of the church had resumed their services, the two societies worshipped together, the one employing its own forms of worship in the morning, and the other doing the same in the afternoon. Among those who officiated at this season for the episcopal society was Mr. Sargent, previously of the episcopal church in Cambridge.

In September, 1782, the attention of some members of the church was turned towards Mr. Freeman, who was then a candidate for the ministry, and he was invited by a letter from the wardens to officiate as reader, for a term of six months. The invitation was accepted by Mr. Freeman, and he entered on his duties on the 18th of the following October.* In the month of February, 1783, the Old South congregation left the Chapel, and returned to their own house. On the 21st of April,

* It is probable that from the very first, Mr. Freeman preached his own sermons, at least a part of the time. This fact is to be inferred from a passage in a letter from him to his sister Lois, afterwards Mrs. Davis, dated December 27th, 1782. This passage I have been kindly permitted to copy. It is as follows:

"While I was upon the Cape, I endeavored to visit all my friends; for being now engaged in the church, I expect not to go there again for many years. The first time I preached at the Chapel, the church was opened with some degree of splendor. There was an anthem and other pieces of music exceedingly beautiful. The audience was immense, and of such a

that same year, Mr. Freeman was chosen pastor of this church, at the age of twenty-four.

When Mr. Freeman consented to act as reader at the Chapel, he stipulated only for liberty to omit the reading of the Athanasian Creed. Leave to do this seems to have been yielded without difficulty; at which we need not wonder; for although the members of the church were orthodox, and attached to episcopacy, the Athanasian Creed was probably no favorite with any one, and was therefore easily if not cheerfully resigned. That the general sentiment was against that strange compound of unintelligible definitions and unchristian anathemas, is to be inferred from the fact, that on the regular formation and establishment of the American Episcopal Church, it was not admitted into her Liturgy. It stands to the credit of that church, that this offspring of the darkness of a dark age, has never disgraced the Book of her Common Prayer.

The mind of Mr. Freeman was at first satisfied with being allowed to omit the reading of the obnoxious creed. The prayers for those in authority were of course altered, to suit the altered political state of the country. In other respects the service which he read, as well as the service of all other episcopal churches, was precisely that of the Church of England; the Liturgy of the American Episcopal Church not being adopted till the year

kind as to overpower all confidence. I felt the weight of it most sensibly. On Christmas day I had another trial of the same kind to pass through. The exertions I am obliged to make on such occasions, keep my mind in a continual agitation. There is a pain attending it, but there is also a pleasure."

Mr. Freeman at this time lived in the family of his friend Mr. Minot, where he remained till he was himself married.

1785. But it was not long before he began to feel scruples concerning other parts of the service, especially those which expressed or implied a belief in the doctrine of the Trinity. As he thought, and read, and studied, and conversed on the subject of this doctrine, he became more and more convinced that it was unscriptural and untrue, and more and more uneasy in reading passages of solemn devotion, in which it was assumed as a Christian truth. It was a season of great mental trial. On the one side were ancient custom, and venerable authority, and the opinions and feelings of respected and beloved friends, urging him to remain in the former ways ; while on the other were a careful conscience and deepening convictions of truth, commanding him to depart from them. He communicated his difficulties to those of his friends with whom he was most intimate. He would come into their houses, and say, "I must leave you. Much as I love you, I must leave you. I cannot conscientiously perform the service of the church any longer, as it now stands." But since he had been among this small remnant of episcopalians as their minister, he had endeared himself to them by his engaging manners and his pastoral services, and it was by no means easy for his friends to part with him. At length a suggestion was made, which terminated in happy and important results. It was said, "Why not state your difficulties, and the grounds of them, publicly to your whole people, that they may be able to judge of the case, and determine whether it is such as to require a separation between you and them, or not?" The suggestion was adopted. He preached a series of sermons, in which he plainly stated his dissatisfaction with the

trinitarian portions of the Liturgy, went fully into an examination of the trinitarian doctrine, and gave his reasons for rejecting it. He has himself assured me that when he delivered those sermons, he was under a strong impression that they would be the last he should ever pronounce from this pulpit. He supposed that some of his hearers might be favorably affected by his arguments, but he could scarcely hope that they would meet with general approbation. He had unburthened his mind; he had justified his course; and he made himself ready to resign his ministerial connexion. But such, as you well know, was not the event. He was heard patiently, attentively, kindly. The greater part of his hearers responded to his sentiments, and resolved to alter their Liturgy and retain their pastor. The first vote favoring this conclusion was passed on the 20th of February, 1785; by which vote a committee was appointed to report such alterations in the Liturgy as were deemed necessary. Alterations were reported, in general conformity with those made in the amended Liturgy of Dr. Samuel Clarke; and on the 19th of June, the proprietors voted, by a majority of about three fourths, to adopt those alterations.

Thus did our late senior minister, by following the dictates of his reason and conscience, become the first preacher in this country of what we hold to be a purified Christian faith; and thus, through the means of his mental integrity and powers of exposition, did the First Episcopal Church in New England, become the First Unitarian Church in the New World.

I mention this not as a matter of boasting, but as an historical fact. He, our departed father, never boasted

of it, or indeed of any thing which he ever did or helped to do ; and at that time the change in doctrine and service which was effected, was not certainly regarded by pastor or people as a subject of triumph, but of serious and arduous duty. No motive of future fame or reputation could have been before them ; but only a sense of the great opposition and odium which would press upon them from without, together with a deep resolve to bear up against it.

It may be said that the relation in which Dr. Freeman stands to the Unitarian Christianity of this country, is the fruit of circumstances alone ; that it was because he happened to be placed in a peculiar situation, at the commencement of our independent national existence, that he was led to be the first open propounder and defender of a regenerated faith. I should be at a loss to say what events and what relations are not in some measure the fruit of circumstances. In circumstances I behold the hand of an omnipresent and overruling Providence ; but in the use, the neglect or the abuse of those circumstances, I perceive the proofs and marks of human ability, liberty and character. The young reader at King's Chapel was surely placed in peculiar circumstances. It is his praise that he made a right and manly use of them ; that he did not smother his convictions, and hush down his conscience, and endeavor to explain away to himself, for the sake of a little false and outward peace, the obvious sense of the prayers which he uttered before God and his people, but took that other and far better course of explicitness and honesty. By this proper use of circumstances, he placed himself where he now stands in our religious history.

While I say that our late senior pastor was the first preacher of Unitarian Christianity in our country, I am not ignorant that he has himself said, in a note to his sermon on the death of Dr. Howard, "that *Dr. Mayhew* may with justice be denominated the first preacher of Unitarianism in Boston, and his religious society the first Unitarian Society." There is no doubt that Dr. Mayhew, and some of his cotemporaries beside, held opinions which were antitrinitarian, and did not conceal them. Passages are quoted, in the note above mentioned, from Dr. Mayhew's sermons, which prove that he did not believe in the equality of Christ with the Father; but they are passages which would not have aroused general attention, or disturbed general prejudices. To such preaching can hardly be awarded the character of an avowal of Unitarianism; and no such avowal was at the time understood to have been made. Dr. Freeman was not the first clergyman in the country who entertained opinions at variance with the received doctrine of the Trinity; but it is now conceded by all, that he was the first who openly and explicitly avowed and maintained proper Unitarian Christianity.

And I cannot but regard it as happy for the Unitarian cause in this country, that its first avowed preacher was such an one as he. His calm confidence in the merits of his cause, the suavity and kindness of his deportment, the guard which he kept over his zeal, and the regard which he manifested for the good and wise of all denominations, appeared in advantageous contrast with the noise and heat and uncharitableness with which he was at first assailed. His own conviction that the open avowal of his religious tenets would be likely to deprive

him of his situation at the Chapel, and the probability that this would be the case, prevented the remotest suspicion that he was actuated by any but the most disinterested motives; and the purity and probity of his life and conduct, in like manner forbade the supposition that his change of faith could be connected with any principles or feelings but those which were virtuous and upright. Good and fairminded men, whether ministers or laymen, could not refuse him their friendship, and were glad to secure his. Among the latter were Richard Cranch, George Richards Minot, Christopher Gore, Dr. Dexter, and indeed most of the distinguished men of the time. Among the former were Chauncy and Howard and Eckley, Belknap and Clarke, Eliot and Lathrop. With these men, and such as these, whose names are canonized among us, and whose society he has now gone to rejoin—how short, after all, is the separation which years and the grave interpose between friends!—with these men he lived, on terms of intimacy and confidence; and by the indirect influence alone which he thus exerted on the hearts, if not on the minds of his associates and others, he must have recommended his views, in the most unexceptionable manner.

But the avowal of obnoxious opinions, and the alterations of the received Liturgy of his church, were not the only difficulties which presented themselves in Mr. Freeman's path, and which he was called upon to surmount. Another difficulty, consequent upon these, was to be engaged and disposed of as it best might be. The church was still episcopal in its forms and usages and predilections, and were desirous of obtaining episcopal ordination for their pastor. But how was this to be

effected? Was it probable that any bishop, knowing his sentiments, would be willing to ordain him? At least the attempt could be made. A letter was accordingly addressed by the wardens to Bishop Provost, dated July 29, 1787, in which they earnestly requested him to bestow ordination on Mr. Freeman, but at the same time expressed their determination to adhere to their altered Liturgy, a copy of which they sent to the Bishop with the letter. Bishop Provost refused, and very properly, to take the responsibility of the ordination upon himself, under the existing circumstances, and stated that the case would be reserved for the consideration of the General Convention. The church, on their part, being convinced that the agitation of the subject in the Convention would give rise to much unpleasant debate, and that the result would be unfavorable to their wishes, urged their claims no further in that quarter, but came to the determination of resorting to first principles, and ordaining their minister themselves. Mr. Freeman was accordingly ordained by his society alone, as their rector and minister, by a solemn, appropriate, and interesting service, at the time of evening prayer, on the 18th of November, 1787. Forty-eight years afterwards, in that very desk where he stood up, firmly yet meekly, to receive the public sanction of his people's choice, and the Book of God which was placed in his right hand, and the blessing which was invoked upon his head, — was his funeral service performed.*

A greater outcry, from some quarters, was made on the occasion of this independent ordination, than when the Liturgy was altered and the Unitarian faith was professed

* November 18, 1835.

at the Chapel. But Mr. Freeman went on quietly in his former course, till its angry echoes died away on his ear. He addressed himself to the duties which were before him, being "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity;" "giving attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." Friends multiplied around him; he saw the opinions to which he had proved himself so true, spreading with a sure and healthy growth; and his days flowed on in usefulness, honor, and peace.


The character of Dr. Freeman was one, which in its more prominent features, could not be mistaken. Honesty and truth the most pure and transparent, associated in happy union with gentleness and urbanity, unaffected modesty, and real kindness and good will to all men — these were qualities so distinctly marked on his every word and action, and even look, that no one could know him without reading them there. He was remarkably candid, but not, as it is sometimes expressed, candid to a fault. His consideration for the feelings of others, saved his candor from hardening into rudeness. He uttered nothing but the truth, but he did not utter it unseasonably or harshly. He always spoke what he meant, but he never meant to wound or to offend; and if, in a moment of excitement, he did wound or offend, he was ready to pour out his oil and wine to soothe and heal. This union of plainness and kindness, of truth and benignity, was observable in both his conversation and his writings. He was always explicit, but seldom controversial. He would rather defend himself, than attack others.

He was truly humble, but he was above all the arts of deception and double-dealing; and he could not be awed or moved in any way from self-respect and duty. He made all allowances for ignorance and prejudice and frailty, but arrogance he would not submit to, and hypocrisy he could not abide.

Dr. Freeman possessed in a remarkable manner the virtue of contentment. You heard no complaints from him. He was abundantly satisfied with his lot;—he was deeply grateful for his lot. The serenity of his countenance was an index to the serenity of his soul. The angel of contentment seemed to shade and fan it with his wings. “I have enjoyed a great deal in this world,” he would often say, “a great deal more than I deserve.” “My life has been a very happy one,” he said to a friend, after his constitution was broken, and he had been exercised for years with a painful disorder, “My life has been a very happy one; I have suffered nothing.”

Great philosophical equanimity and self-command were naturally associated with his contented temper, and indeed made part of it. His dignified endurance of provocation, as I have before remarked, was exemplary. His patience under disappointment, was so steady and complete, that it was only the few who were acquainted with circumstances, who knew that he had been disappointed, and these few knew it only from sympathy, and not from any signs in him.

Dr. Freeman possessed strong feelings and affections, and was capable of ardent and lasting attachments. His general manner, especially in his preaching, was so calm, sedate, and rational, with even occasional abrupt-



ness, that a transient observer might have been led to suppose that he was not apt to be moved, or that he was even deficient in feeling. But this would have been a mistake. His heart was full of feeling, which not unfrequently rose up to his eyes, and flowed out in tears. A similar mistake might have been made concerning his piety. He had seen so much external piety which was false and delusive, that he was induced to restrain the expression of his own religious emotions, as some might think, too carefully, and thereby permit it to be supposed that they did not exist. But his piety was real, vital, practical, ever-glowing. It was the sun of his internal world, which ripened the rich fruits of his life. All who knew him, knew that he was pious, truly and deeply so.

He was generous, though poor. He would cheerfully cancel a debt, on the debtor's plea of inability, and he valued money only as it enabled him to contribute to the comfort of those who needed his assistance.

He loved children, and loved to converse with and encourage them, and draw out their faculties and affections. His manners, always affable and kind, were never so completely lovely as in his intercourse with them. Naturally and insensibly did he instil moral principles and religious thoughts into their minds, and his good influence, being thus gentle, was permanent. The same sweetness and consideration were manifested toward all who were his juniors. Nothing seemed to give him so much pleasure as to see a virtuous, intelligent, and ingenuous youth. Toward young ministers and candidates for the ministry, his bearing was truly paternal. I have heard several of my brethren speak with grateful warmth of his early attentions to them; attentions

which were valuable in themselves, and yet enhanced in value by their seasonableness.

Dr. Freeman was a just man; a man to be trusted. You could confide your property to him, and, a more delicate trust, your character. He was not blind to the faults of men, nor was he blind to any of their good qualities; and he would rather dwell on the latter than expose the former. He found something good in every one; and it was his pleasure to find it, and to point it out. No difference of opinion, no public rumor or clamor, could sway the course of this universal justice. If it was swayed at all, it was by his kindliness of heart, which sometimes led him to treat the demerits of an individual more leniently than the interests of strict morality and the demands of strict justice might seem to require. But this was because he was merciful to the sinner, and not because he was insensible to the sin. It was one of his favorite maxims, that a Christian should be indulgent to others, and severe to himself.

The mind of Dr. Freeman was one of great originality. It arrived at its own conclusions, and in its own way. You could not be long in his society, without feeling that you were in the presence of one who observed and reflected for himself. His opinions of books and of subjects, were not the echoes of public opinion, or of the paragraphs of a popular review, or of the judgments of a great man. They were his own, and were expressed with decision, yet without an attempt or a wish to dictate. He liked to hear the opinions of others, and heard them respectfully. What he said was often racy and pointed, and was sometimes even paradoxical; but his point was never envenomed, and he would allow so

many exceptions and qualifications to his paradoxes, as the conversation proceeded, that they lost their startling guise, and took the aspect of sober truths.

Dr. Freeman ranks high among the writers of our country. In early life he contributed a full share to the passing literature of the day—a literature which is called fugitive, but which often leaves a permanent impression on the mental and moral character of a people. Afterward he composed some valuable papers for the use of the Massachusetts Historical Society, which were printed in their Collections. This Society, it may be observed, honors him as one of its founders.

But his reputation as a writer rests principally upon his published Sermons. These are highly and deservedly esteemed; and their author's mental and moral character is expressed in them more clearly than I can describe it. Their subjects are various, but their style is uniform; and that style is distinguished for its purity, simplicity, and perspicuity. We do not meet in them with the billowy swells of eloquence, or the lightning flashes of genius; but they abound in just observation, acute remark, lucid exposition, affectionate appeal, distinct and practical instruction, sincere and confiding piety, with passages of graphic beauty and quiet pathos. You see before you the holy Lake of Galilee, not disturbed by sudden storms, and tossing the terrified disciples on its wild waves, but bearing up their bark on its quiet bosom, while they sit in peace, and listen to the heavenly wisdom of their Lord. We of this Society especially, shall prize the sermons of Dr. Freeman for their own and for their writer's sake; and the volume which he caused to be printed and distributed among his

parishoners a few years ago, in grateful acknowledgment of their liberality towards him, will be held precious by each individual possessor.*

Till the year 1809, Dr. Freeman performed the ministerial duties of this church, alone. About this time his strength experienced a decline ; and on the 1st of January of the above mentioned year, the Rev. Samuel Cary was ordained as his assistant and colleague. In this connexion, while it lasted, Dr. Freeman was very happy. But it was permitted to last but a short time. The health of Mr. Cary failed ; he was obliged to relinquish his duties ; he sailed for England in the hope of restoration, but died there not long after his arrival, on the 22d of October, 1815 ;— and with faltering accents and an almost bursting heart, Dr. Freeman preached in this pulpit the Funeral Discourse on his young and excellent friend.

Again he was alone in his charge till the summer of the year 1824, when the present surviving minister of the church accepted an invitation to be settled as his colleague, and was inducted as such on the 29th of

* The first volume of sermons which Dr. Freeman gave to the public, passed through three editions, the first of which was printed in 1812, and the third in 1821. This volume was entitled "Sermons on Particular occasions. By James Freeman." It contained ten Sermons and two Charges. The next volume which he issued, entitled "Eighteen Sermons and a Charge," was printed in 1829, but not published. It is the one which he printed at his own expense, and distributed among his parishoners and friends. In 1832 he collected the Sermons and Charges of these two volumes together, omitted some of the Notes, added one very brief but most marrowy sermon on Necessity, and a free translation of one of St. Basil's homilies, and published the whole in one volume, with the title of "Sermons and Charges. By James Freeman. New Edition." It is probable that this volume contains all the sermons which he cared to leave behind him. I am acquainted with more eloquent volumes of Sermons, but with none more interesting than this.

August. From my boyhood I had sat under the ministry of Dr. Freeman ; from my boyhood I had revered and loved him ; and I looked forward to some years at least of that important assistance which a father might render to a son, of that intimate and improving communion which a son might hold with his father. But it was not to be so. The illness of my venerated colleague had so greatly impaired his constitution, that he felt himself obliged to retire from the pulpit about the close of the year 1825, and in the summer of 1826 he went to his residence in Newton, which he left no more, till his spirit departed to a better world.

Although for these last ten years of his retirement, Dr. Freeman was obliged to resist the attacks of an obdurate disorder by the daily use of medicine, and was subject to occasional fits of severe agony, yet the work of decline and the progress of infirmity were very gradual with him. In winter he was confined to the house, but in summer and autumn he was generally to be found in his garden, or the grounds about his house, of the cultivation of which he was exceedingly fond. It was pleasant to see him, to hear him, to talk with him, and he delighted in the visits and converse of his friends. His appearance, which always within my own remembrance had been venerable, was now patriarchal. His form was slightly bowed by age ; his blue eyes spoke nothing but kindness and thoughtfulness ; the top of his finely-shaped head was bare, and his remaining locks were as white as snow.

It was the desire of our departed friend and father that he might not outlive his active usefulness, or stay on earth till the faculties of his mind were impaired. But this was in submission to the will of Providence, and it was the will of Providence, that he should remain

for a time an example of patience and resignation. He never troubled his friends with the repeated expression of this desire to be gone; his remarkable good sense kept by him to the last, and preserved him from the common and less agreeable peculiarities of old age. Even when his mind grew enfeebled, it showed its strength in weakness. His memory sometimes failed him, and his ideas would become somewhat confused, within the few months preceding his death; but his bearing was always calm and manly; he fell into no second childhood.

He looked upon death as it approached him, without fear, yet with pious humility. He viewed the last change as a most solemn change; the judgment of God upon the soul as a most solemn judgment. "Let no one say when I am dead," he expressed himself to his nearest friends, "that I trusted in my own merits. My own merits are nothing. I trust only in the mercy of God through Jesus Christ."


When the attack fell upon him which terminated in his death, he asked the physician who came to see him what he thought of his situation. "You are very ill, sir," was the reply. Then the longing to be away could no longer be suppressed. "You bear me," was the answer of our aged friend, "the most gratifying intelligence which I have heard for years."

He languished in unconsciousness, interrupted by pain, for a few days; but during the last two days of his life pain left him, and on the night of Saturday, the 14th of this month,* about midnight, he breathed out his spirit as quietly as an infant goes to sleep.


* November, 1835; in the 77th year of his age.

It was the intention of his friends, that his remains should be brought to Boston the Wednesday succeeding his death, and that the funeral service should be performed over them, in the church where he had ministered so long. But as it was found on the morning of Tuesday, that the body was not in a state to bear the removal, his funeral took place at his house in Newton on the afternoon of that day. The sun was setting, as the mortal part of our father was laid in the tomb. The rays shone softly and richly on the quiet and retired village grave-yard. The last leaves of a mild autumn, were dropping around the friends who were standing there in solemn silence. It was a beautiful and appropriate closing scene. The next day a funeral service was performed in the Chapel, which was attended by the congregation, and by numbers beside, who were desirous of paying this tribute of respect to departed worth.

His death is certainly no subject of lamentation, my friends. The event, we believe, is a blessed one for him. We mourn for him no more than for a captive who is released from his prison — for a travel-stained and peril-worn pilgrim who has reached his home. But we cannot let him go without feeling. It is true that for a series of years he has been removed from our daily recognition; that many of this congregation have seen him but little, and some perhaps, not at all during this period. But he cannot be separated from us without our thinking what he has been to us and what he has done for us; and our memories and our sympathies must unite to bless him. There are many here, on whose foreheads his hand, now cold in death, has been gently laid, while he sprinkled upon them the waters of baptism,



in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. There are some here whom he once united together in the holy bonds of marriage. There are those into whose sick chambers he has brought consolation. There are those whose friends he has consigned, with the solemn service of the church, to the tomb. There are many to whom he has offered the bread of life and the cup of blessing, while they knelt around that communion table, in memory of their Saviour. How can he have done these things without associating himself with your most sacred and tender emotions and recollections? You must feel his departure. It is impossible that he should pass away without the tribute of your feeling.—Pass then, beloved spirit of our father, pastor, friend! Pass into thy rest! We would not, if we could, recall or detain thee! But pass, with our grateful memories, our reverent sympathies, our earnest benedictions, crowding and hanging around thee! And if it be allowed to departed and sanctified spirits to minister unto those who are still walking here in dimness and weakness, then let us even now participate in thy care, till we join thee, through the mercy of God, in the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven.



A P R A Y E R

ADDED TO THE OFFICE OF BURIAL OF THE DEAD,
IN THE FUNERAL SERVICE AT KING'S CHAPEL, NOVEMBER 18, 1835.

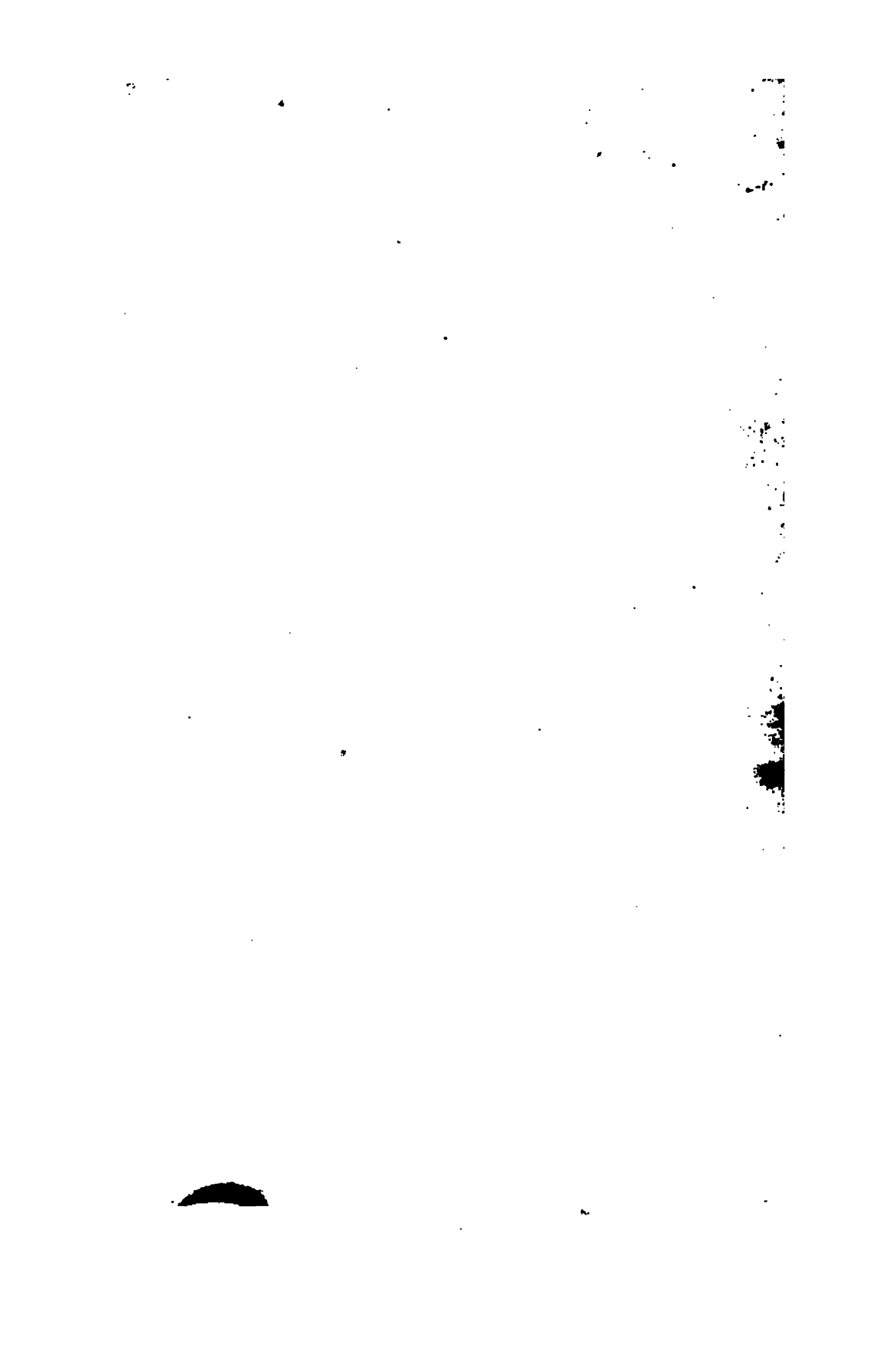
O thou God of our fathers! with whom they walked, and in whom they trusted! we bow before thee in humble acknowledgment of the dispensation of thy Providence, by which thou hast taken from a family of thy people its honored head, and from this church their beloved and venerated senior Pastor. Sanctify the solemn event to the surviving relatives of thy departed servant. Be thou the widow's God, and the Father of the fatherless. May their affections be raised to thee in devout thankfulness for the mercy which spared thy servant to them so long; for all the counsels and influences of his gentle wisdom; for his worthy example; for the fortitude with which he bore his pains; for the resignation of his closing days; and for his peaceful departure at last. May they rest their hopes and desires on those heavenly things on which his hopes and desires reposed; that they may arrive at that blessed home, whither we trust his spirit is gone.

And we beseech thee sanctify this event to thy church, unto whom thy servant ministered for so many years, till pain and illness came at thy word, and he could labor no more. With gratitude to thee, let them remember his past services; his Christian life and doctrine; the purity, the meekness, and the singleness of heart with which he came in and went out before them. It is our prayer that he may not have spoken and lived in vain for them. May it be found in the great day of account, that many have been profited by his exhortations, and happily influenced by his example. And grant that those to whom he has ministered on earth, may meet him in the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven.

Sanctify the death of thine aged servant our father, to his brethren and sons in the ministry, and especially to the surviving pastor of this church. May we hear in this event a renewed call to be faithful, humble, blameless; to approve ourselves in all things as the ministers of God; to fight the good fight of faith; and finally to lay hold on eternal life.

May the death of thy servant be sanctified to all those who knew and loved him; to his many friends; to those who are old and gray-headed; to the churches of Christ, and to this whole community. May all be religiously impressed by thy dispensations, and may all be prepared for thy whole will,—and for that time when death shall be swallowed up of life, and thou shalt appear in judgment to the souls of men. In that hour, O God, grant us mercy and deliverance, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—
AMEN.





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A sermon preached in King's chapel,
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